WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1   1.   A method of displaying layered data, said method
2   comprising:
3   identifying a plurality of shading colors, each of the
4   shading colors corresponding to a different data
5   layer;
6   identifying a plurality of data items to be displayed
7   in a display window;
8   for each data item:
9   determining one of the data layers corresponding
10   to the data item;
11   selecting a shading color from the plurality of
12   shading colors, wherein the shading color
13   corresponds to the determined data layer;
14   formatting the data item using the selected
15   shading color; and
16   displaying the formatted data item in the display
17   window, wherein each formatted data item is
18   positioned with a left margin substantially
19   similar to a left margin corresponding to
20   the other data items.

1   2.   The method as described in claim 1 wherein the shading
2   color includes grayscale shading.

1   3.   The method as described in claim 1 further comprising:
2   analyzing an attribute corresponding to each data
3   item;
4   determining a visual highlight corresponding to the
5   attribute;
6   including the visual highlight with the formatted data
7   item.

1   4.   The method as described in claim 3 wherein the visual
2   highlight is selected from the group consisting of
3   blinking, text coloring, bolding, italicizing,
4   underlining, striking through, shadowing, outlining,
5   capitalizing, and font changing.

1   5.   The method as described in claim 1 further comprising:
2   receiving a data item selection from a user;
3   displaying one or more formatted data items below the
4   selected data item in response to the user
5   selecting an unexpanded data item; and
6   removing one or more formatted data items from the
7   display area beneath the selected data item in
8   response to the user selecting an expanded data
9   item.

1   6.   The method as described in claim 1 further comprising:
2   displaying a graphic icon with each formatted data
3   item, the graphic icon indicating whether the
4   formatted data item is expanded.

1   7.   The method as described in claim 1 further comprising:
2   displaying an alphanumeric level identifier with each
3   formatted data item that identifies the level
4   corresponding to the formatted data item.

1   8.   The method as described in claim 1 further comprising:
2   displaying a level indicator bar with each formatted
3   data item, wherein one margin of the level
4   indicator bar indicates a data level
5   corresponding to the formatted data item.

1   9.   An information handling system comprising:

2   one or more processors;

3   a memory accessible by the processors;

4   a display screen accessible by the processors; and

5   a layered data display tool to display layered data on

6   the display screen, the layered data display tool

7   including:

8   means for identifying a plurality of shading colors,

9   each of the shading colors corresponding to a

10   different data layer;

11   means for identifying a plurality of data items to be

12   displayed on the display screen;

13   for each data item:

14   means for determining one of the data layers

15   corresponding to the data item;

16   means for selecting a shading color from the

17   plurality of shading colors, wherein the

18   shading color corresponds to the determined

19   data layer;

20   means for formatting the data item using the

21   selected shading color; and

22   means for displaying the formatted data item on

23   the display screen, wherein each formatted

24   data item is positioned with a left margin

25   substantially similar to a left margin

26   corresponding to the other data items.

1   10.   The information handling system as described in claim

2   9 wherein the shading color includes grayscale

3   shading.

1   11.   The information handling system as described in claim

2   9 further comprising:

3   means for receiving a data item selection from a user;

4   means for displaying one or more formatted data items

5   below the selected data item in response to the

6   user selecting an unexpanded data item; and

7   means for removing one or more formatted data items

8   from the display area beneath the selected data

9   item in response to the user selecting an

10   expanded data item.

1 12. The information handling system as described in claim

2   9 further comprising:

3   means for displaying a graphic icon with each

4   formatted data item, the graphic icon indicating

5   whether the formatted data item is expanded.

1 13. The information handling system as described in claim

2   9 further comprising:

3   means for displaying an alphanumeric level identifier

4   with each formatted data item that identifies the

5   level corresponding to the formatted data item.

1 14. The information handling system as described in claim

2   9 further comprising:

3   means for displaying a level indicator bar with each

4   formatted data item, wherein one margin of the

5   level indicator bar indicates a data level

6   corresponding to the formatted data item.

1 15. A computer program product for displaying layered

2   data, said computer program product comprising:

3   means for identifying a plurality of shading colors,

4   each of the shading colors corresponding to a

5   different data layer;

6   means for identifying a plurality of data items to be

7   displayed in a display window;

8   for each data item:

9   means for determining one of the data layers

10   corresponding to the data item;

11   means for selecting a shading color from the

12   plurality of shading colors, wherein the

13   shading color corresponds to the determined

14   data layer;

15   means for formatting the data item using the

16   selected shading color; and

17   means for displaying the formatted data item in

18   the display window, wherein each formatted

19   data item is positioned with a left margin

20   substantially similar to a left margin

21   corresponding to the other data items.

1   16.   The computer program product as described in claim 15

2   wherein the shading color includes grayscale shading.

1   17.   The computer program product as described in claim 15

2   further comprising:

3   means for receiving a data item selection from a user;

4   means for displaying one or more formatted data items

5   below the selected data item in response to the

6   user selecting an unexpanded data item; and

7   means for removing one or more formatted data items

8   from the display area beneath the selected data

9   item in response to the user selecting an

10   expanded data item.

1   18.   The computer program product as described in claim 15

2   further comprising:

3   means for displaying a graphic icon with each
4   formatted data item, the graphic icon indicating
5   whether the formatted data item is expanded.

1   19. The computer program product as described in claim 15
2   further comprising:
3   means for displaying an alphanumeric level identifier
4   with each formatted data item that identifies the
5   level corresponding to the formatted data item.

1   20. The computer program product as described in claim 15
2   further comprising:
3   means for displaying a level indicator bar with each
4   formatted data item, wherein one margin of the
5   level indicator bar indicates a data level
6   corresponding to the formatted data item.